

*Health Information for Hazardous Waste Sites***Former DuPont Barksdale Works**Bayfield County, Wisconsin  
November 2002**Summary**

The Wisconsin Department of Health & Family Services (DHFS), in coordination with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, have issued for public comment the report titled "Public Health Assessment for the Former DuPont Barksdale Works". This fact sheet summarizes DHFS findings in the report, including the conclusions and recommendations. It is based on sampling data collected by the Department of Natural Resources, DuPont and their contractors. *(Recommendations from the report appear below in italics)*

**Site Summary**

From 1905 until 1971, the E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Company (DuPont) made millions of pounds of explosives at a facility in the Town of Barksdale, Bayfield County. The former DuPont Barksdale Works is approximately 1,800 acres and is bordered to the southeast by Lake Superior's Chequamegon Bay. In 1971, DuPont closed the facility and most buildings were demolished, but little environmental cleanup was done. Contamination remains on and around the former DuPont Barksdale Works property. For further information on the property, refer to the DNR fact sheet "A History of the DuPont/Barksdale Site" (RR-670, Sept 2001).

**On-Site Contamination**

A recent draft report of on-site investigations described specific soils and ponds that have significant contamination, but the public does not have easy access to these areas. Once the on-site environmental investigation is finalized, DHFS will evaluate the environmental sampling data and prepare a public health consultation. *People should not go onto the property without permission and knowledge of areas where contamination is known or appears to be present. The current owners of the former DuPont Barksdale property should continue to maintain the fence and "no trespassing" signs around the property perimeter.*

**Off-Site Contamination**

Other than off-site groundwater and off-site surface water run-off, neighbors have a very low chance of being exposed to site-related contamination that might pose a health concern.

**Drinking Water Contamination**

Starting in 1997, tests found residues of explosive chemicals in 17 drinking water wells located between the site and Lake Superior. Two chemicals were found in private well water above their Wisconsin groundwater standards. Treatment systems were installed on private wells and provide safe, clean drinking water. *Ongoing sampling of nearby private wells is important, as is testing and servicing of the treatment systems.*

**Surface Water Contamination**

When explosives were produced at the DuPont Barksdale Works facility, wastes went into creeks on the property. A recent, limited investigation found contamination in these creeks, but the levels were very low and are not a health hazard. When the facility was operating, the levels of contamination in the creeks was probably higher and may have been a hazard to wildlife and people, but no environmental sampling data are available from that time (prior to 1972). In 1982 waters of an on-site drainage ditch, which emptied into Boyd Creek, had a low pH and could have caused skin irritation in people who touched the water. Because of the very limited data, DHFS cannot confidently conclude that contamination in Boyd Creek or other on-site creeks was a public health hazard in the past.

## Chemicals of Concern

Two forms of dinitrotoluene (DNT) found in private well water were above the State of Wisconsin groundwater standard. However, the levels of DNT in Barksdale drinking water were very low, are not a health hazard and do not pose a significant cancer risk. At very high levels DNT can affect the nervous system and the blood. DNT also causes cancer in laboratory animals.

## Health Data Review

A review of cancer and death certificate data did not find an unusual number of cancers in the Barksdale area that may be linked to site-related contamination. DHFS and the Bayfield County Health Department have spoken with residents and have not identified an unusual amount of illness or disease in the community or among people who had affected private wells. No further health investigations or studies of nearby residents are currently planned.

## Additional Actions by Public Health Agencies

*DHFS and the Bayfield County Health Department will continue meeting with concerned residents to address their health concerns and issues about environmental contamination from the former DuPont Barksdale property. DHFS and the Bayfield County will conduct educational outreach to area health care providers to increase their knowledge about the health implications of environmental contamination coming from the former DuPont Barksdale property.*

*Once on-site environmental sampling data is finalized, DHFS will prepare a public health consultation regarding the human health implications of on-site conditions.*

## Public Health Assessment

DHFS has prepared a public health assessment on the Former DuPont Barksdale Works. Starting November 14, 2002, the report was released for a 60 day public comment period. Copies are available at the Washburn Public Library, Bayfield County Health Department, or DHFS by contacting William Borzon at 608-267-3227 or [borzowj@dhfs.state.wi.us](mailto:borzowj@dhfs.state.wi.us). Copies are also available at the DHFS web site:

<http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/eh/PHA/phaindex.htm>  
and the Bayfield County Health Department web site:  
<http://www.bayfieldcounty.org/Health/HEALTH.htm>

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## For More Information

To see official documents and records visit the:

Washburn Public Library  
307 Washington Avenue  
Washburn, WI 54891

Bayfield County Health Department  
117 East Fifth Street  
Washburn, WI 54891

Information is also available about the Barksdale site from the DuPont Company:

Bradley Nave, Project Director  
DuPont Corporate Remediation Group  
4200 Camp Ground Road  
Louisville, KY 40216  
866-833-7875 (toll free)

<http://www.dupont.com/barksdale/>

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